

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-17, 20-31, and 36 are pending in this case. Claim 18 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Chuprun et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,580, hereinafter "Chuprun") in view of Sumic (U.S. Patent No. 5,568,399). Claims 1-17, 20-31, and 36 are allowed.

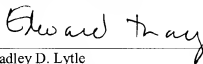
Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the allowance of Claims 1-17, 20-31, and 36.

With regard to the outstanding rejection, Claim 18 is canceled, making this rejection moot.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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